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INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
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AMGT, MG, EAGR, HHS, TF, CH
SUBJECT: TFFLU01: H1N1 INFLUENZA OUTBREAK - CHINA SITREP # 14

REF: A) BEIJING 1335 B) BEIJING 1317 C) BEIJING 1298 D) BEIJING
1283 E) BEIJING 1274 F) BEIJING 1264

FOURTH CASE CONFIRMED ON MAINLAND CHINA, FIFTH SUSPECTED

¶1. (U) As of May 19, there are four confirmed cases of influenza A (H1N1) on Mainland China. China's Ministry of Health (MOH) announced that the suspected case in Guangzhou reported on May 18 has been confirmed as influenza A (H1N1) positive by China CDC (REF A). There are three other confirmed H1N1 cases on Mainland China (REF A, D and F). Hong Kong also has three confirmed cases of influenza A (H1N1).

¶2. (SBU) On May 19, MOH informed Embassy Beijing of a suspected H1N1 case in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). The Italian female flew from Italy to Nepal on May 12 and developed flu-like symptoms on May 15. She exhibited a high fever when she arrived at Zhangmu port in the TAR on May 16, and then was transferred to the port hospital. On May 18, Tibet CDC test results showed positive for influenza A/H1N1 nucleic acid. A sample from the case has been sent to China CDC for final confirmation. All of the 23 travelers with the suspected case, including six AmCits (REF A), have been quarantined in a local hotel in Zhangmu.

STATUS OF AMCIT QUARANTINE CASES

¶3. (SBU) As of May 19, 11 American citizens are reported to be in quarantine throughout China. Four AmCits are currently quarantined in Beijing, one is quarantined in Shanghai and another six are quarantined in the TAR.

-- Four AmCits are quarantined in Beijing at Ditan Hospital.

--One AmCit male is quarantined in Shanghai. He arrived in Shanghai via flight AA289 on May 18 and had no fever or contact with symptomatic cases, but was quarantined because he transited Mexico within the last 7 days. He should be released from quarantine on May 21.

--Six American citizens are being quarantined in a hotel in Zhangmu,

a town close to the Nepal border in the TAR. ConGen Chengdu has been in contact with the AmCits and is working to get information about their medical test results from the TAR FAO. If their test results come back negative for H1N1, the Amcits could be released by May 22. (Note: This is a correction from REF A about the same group which we believed to be five in number and quarantined in Lhasa. End note.)

EMBASSY BEIJING POSTS RESPONSE TO CHINESE PRESS ACCUSATIONS

¶4. (SBU) To address criticism in the Chinese media about poor U.S. government and media response to the H1N1 virus, Embassy Beijing PAS has posted on the Embassy website a statement in both Chinese and English describing U.S. efforts to prevent the spread of H1N1.

CHINA'S NET USERS ANGRY AT AND FEARFUL OF OVERSEAS STUDENTS

¶5. (U) According to press reports, Chinese Net users are venting their anger at the three overseas Chinese students who returned from overseas (two from the United States and one from Canada) and were later confirmed to be infected with influenza A (H1N1). All three were harshly criticized for traveling and spending time in public after they already had symptoms. Some netizens suggested the government ban all overseas Chinese from returning. More than two-thirds of the 15,000 polled on sina.net said overseas students should stay away as long as the virus is still a problem.

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CHINA ISSUES NEW HEALTH DECLARATION FORM

¶6. (U) Effective May 18, China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) has issued a new health declaration form. The new form, which must be filled out upon arrival, requires passengers to declare any travel plans for the seven days after landing, including details such as contact addresses and numbers, and carrier numbers for flights. The number of symptoms asked about on the form has also increased from eight to ¶11.

DELEGATION TO THE U.S. QUARANTINED UPON RETURN

¶7. (U) According to press reports, a group of 24 officials who were sent to the U.S. for a study tour were quarantined upon their return to Hainan. No one in the group had unusual symptoms, but the province reportedly put the group in seven days of home quarantine, due to the "rapidly increasing trend of H1N1 in the United States" and the need "to avoid the risk of importing cases."

CHINA ISOLATES ITS FIRST H1N1 VIRUS STRAIN

¶8. (U) China CDC's National Influenza Laboratory has successfully isolated the nation's first outbreak associated H1N1 virus strain from a clinical sample from the first case in China (REF F) and named it as A/Sichuan/1/2009(H1N1). The virus isolated in China and the virus isolated from the U.S and Mexico are homologous. China CDC has submitted the sequence to the Genbank Sequence Database (under the National Institutes of Health - NIH) and the Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data (GISAID), both sources for international collaboration and information sharing.

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